

**SEVEN  
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ON  
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## HIDDEN WISDOM IN THE BIBLE

Continuing the series of thirteen talks by Geoffrey Hodson

In presenting certain ideas concerning the interpretation of our Scriptures, I wish to make it very clear from the beginning that I have no desire to weaken the faith of any Christian in the literal reading of the Bible, with all its beauty, consolation and inspiration. On the contrary, my hope is that such faith may be strengthened by a deepening understanding of the hidden wisdom contained in the many wonderful books of our Bible.

The Scriptures have been regarded by some Biblical scholars as belonging to a special category of literature, sometimes called "the sacred language". The distinguishing characteristic of this kind of writing is that while its narratives have a definite historical basis, the language itself is largely allegorical. It is constructed of symbols and allegories containing profound spiritual truths. This language is also referred to as the Mystery Language, and said to have been invented by great seers and prophets of old. And for at least two purposes: to reveal to those who could be helped, and to conceal from those who could not, spiritual knowledge and the power which knowledge gives.

Is this secrecy really necessary today? I'm afraid it is. The necessity for this reservation becomes fairly clear when we consider the use to which modern man puts scientific discoveries. Think of atomic bombs, for example, made from the energy derived from nuclear fission and fusion. While recognizing, therefore, that their knowledge belongs to the race, the ancient seers and prophets saw that if this knowledge became regularly available great harm could be done.

Let me illustrate this idea of allegory to you. Let me take the story of the stilling of the tempest on Lake Galilee, a very good example of an inspired allegory. The ship, for example, is looked upon as a symbol of the body of man, which conveys the soul with its various attributes over the waters of life. The disciples, like all people in such stories, are personifications of human qualities and tendencies. We see the impulsiveness of Peter, the business capacity of Matthew at the receipt of customs, and the love of St. John, the disciple whom Jesus loved and who was the only disciple present both in the courtroom and at the foot of the cross.

Judas also, who betrayed his Master, can be represented in each one of us, can he not? He represents the tendency to fall below and even betray the highest qualities in us for material gain. Happily also, the divine presence exists in each one of us too, even if asleep for a time, just as when our Lord slept on the disciples' voyage.

Then, you will remember, a great storm arose and in their anxiety the disciples awoke "the sleeping passenger", their Master, the Lord Christ. Then He in His majesty and might arose and stilled by a word the raging tempest, saying "Peace, be still."

Here is teaching for us today. When we human beings are threatened by emotional storms, by gusts of anger and hatred, or by the cravings of sensual desire which threaten the success and even the safety of our lives, we, too, are advised by this story to awaken the divine power sleeping within us and call upon its aid. Thus uplifted and empowered we shall find ourselves able to say to the storms within us "Peace, be still". And with certainty of obedience.

The importance of the storms of life is also indicated in this wonderful story. For had it not been for the tempest on Galilee, the Christ might not have been awakened. So, also, our struggles and the stresses in our lives-- these experiences can be the means of awakening our higher, more spiritual powers.

Do you remember the story of the woman healed of hitherto incurable sickness after suffering for twelve years? This also could be symbolically interpreted. A deep conviction awoke in this woman that if she set forth in search of the Great Teacher who was in her district she would be healed. Despite her weakness, she found Him, but was unable to come near on account of the press, or throng, of people in the way. Her faith, however, was very great. She stretched forth her hand and touched, not His person exactly, but the hem of His garment. And straightway she was whole.

If this story be interpreted as an allegory applicable to us all as well as a historical fact recorded in a special manner, then we, too, are spiritually imperfect and therefore sick; and we, in our turn, if we but seek, can discover the God within us and touch the fringe of Its consciousness. Then

we, too, shall be made whole.

But we have a throng in the way, don't we? These people who are in the way symbolize all the un-Christ-like attributes of mankind, the impurity, the cruelty, the unkindness, the selfishness and the self indulgence which come between us and our Christ nature. Eventually, these must go. But, in the meantime if, full of faith, we reach upwards with our aspiring thought and prayer, we also may symbolically touch the hem of Christ's garment, the Christ within us. Those who have achieved this will know that when once the consciousness of the divine self within has been experienced, floods of inspiration and healing grace descend upon body and soul. Thereafter, straightway they can become whole.

Another interesting symbol is the mountain, said to be a symbol of the uplifted state of consciousness. You will remember that many of the great events recorded in the Bible happened "upon the mount". Christ was transfigured there, and preached His greatest sermon on the mount. Elijah, too, had need of counsel of the Lord, and he was told to stand upon the mount before the Lord, meaning to exalt his consciousness. And then there came an earthquake, a rushing wind, and then a fire, symbol of the restless and disruptive activity of the mind. But the Lord was not in the earthquake, the wind or the fire. Consciousness must be lifted above the physical, emotional and mental levels. And then, as with Elijah, in the silence which follows, the Voice of the Silence is heard.

That story of Elijah and the still, small voice is quite a manual of meditation, a description of the means whereby self illumination may be attained. You will have noticed that in these interpretations, each story is regarded as descriptive of an interior, subjective experience, as if all happened within the soul of every man. St. Paul evidently took this view. For him, the nativity of Christ was an interior experience, for he said: "I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you." And the poet has said: "Though Christ a thousand times in Bethlehem be born and not within thyself, thy soul shall be forlorn. The cross on Golgotha thou lookest to in vain unless within thyself it be set up again."

Such deep realization of the divine presence and activity

within each and every one of us can indeed bring down floods of spiritual and intellectual power. And, of course, such inner power could be seriously misused to the detriment both of the user and of others. And so this safeguard has been designed and used--that of the symbolical language developed to conceal from the profane and yet to reveal to the worthy that spiritual knowledge which is indeed a source of mighty power.

By some scholars, you know, the whole Bible has thus been regarded as a collection of wonderful allegories, written in the language of symbols to preserve, to conceal, and yet to reveal truths which were normally taught direct only to those who were pledged pupils of Great Teachers.

Our Lord used this method when speaking to His disciples, you may remember. For our Lord said in privacy to His disciples these words which might be descriptive of His whole method of teaching by allegory and symbol. Here are our Lord's wonderful words spoken, I repeat, in privacy to His disciples. He said: "Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the Kingdom of God, but to them that are without, all these things are done in parables."

## CHRISTIANITY AS A POWER FOR PROGRESS

Does modern Christianity need to be revivified? Some people nowadays believe that it does. When asked, they say "In these days following the two World Wars we meet the utter pessimism of men and women who, in those wars and afterwards, lost all they held dear. They question that there can be a God at all, or, if there be, that He can be God of Love and Mercy since He allows such terrible things to happen to His children."

This disillusionment is one of the most difficult of moods to meet, and yet (we must admit this, I'm afraid) these black clouds of despair do cast shadows over the entire world. These shadows are, I think, much deepened by the spread of cynicism and bitterness, especially among our young people. Let us look at these criticisms which are being levelled against our religion. There is, for instance, the criticism that it has proved impotent to influence favorably either human conduct or the progress of major world events from the beginning of this Twentieth Century.

Of course, some people affirm that it is not Christianity that needs to be reformed, but we Christians ourselves. There is in modern Christianity a great deal to applaud even if there is also something to deplore. Although in our lifetime Christian nations have embarked upon unprovoked aggression, other nations, guided by a truly Christian spirit and at great cost to themselves, have successfully resisted two major attempts to conquer, impoverish and enslave humanity.

And then again--a great Christian achievement, I think--two great world organizations, with the cooperation also of non-Christian nations, have been formed for the purposes of collective resistance to such wanton aggression. They were formed to preserve world peace, to combat vice, and to give assistance to peoples in need. These are the League of Nations and the United Nations, both of which have rendered very great service to humanity.

Moreover, the search for knowledge, for understanding and for truth is everywhere evident throughout Christendom. From these activities alone we may assume, I think, that the heart of humanity is sound. At the same time human conduct is under criticism. And Christianity is, in consequence,

accused of relative impotence in the face of the grave evils of our time. Christian apologists add that the evil is not with Christianity but with modern man. They say that it is impossible to assess the true value of the Christian Faith because, in fact, it has never yet been collectively and thoroughly tried.

What, then, are the chief charges against modern man, particularly in Christian countries? We are being told that in this period we have displayed certain serious evils such as a marked decline in morality on all levels: on the international level (aggressive wars), on the political level (corruption), and on the personal level (selfishness; dishonesty and immorality). In the economic and industrial fields of monopolies, trusts and cartels, and in cut-throat competition the doctrine of "each for himself and the Devil take the hindmost" causes man to appear to adopt the law of the jungle.

Sir Richard Livingstone, a distinguished British scholar and educator, lecturing in Australia in 1951 under the auspices of the National University there, made another charge. "This age has sex on the brain", he said. "It is decaying in consequence....Today's students too often stumble through their education as if they were drunk, not knowing where they are, where they are going, or what they are doing."

He said that there is too much emphasis on preparing young people to earn a living, and not nearly enough on teaching them how to live. Men no longer have driving moral force, a belief in high principles and a willingness to accept discipline and make sacrifices for them, which is far more important to the survival of humanity than either knowledge or intelligence.

He concluded by saying "If the world is ever to recover from its present sick uncertainty, it must be prepared to accept certain principles which are in the broadest sense of the term Christian principles. Christianity is a doctrine of individual responsibility. The man who lives by it chooses a hard way but a happy one." Thus, Sir Richard has put his finger on some of our maladies.

Let us consider another aspect. What is the heart of spirituality as taught by precept and example so wonderfully by the revered Founder of our Christian faith? Is it not self-

surrender, as portrayed by His Nativity in poverty, told in His Sermon on the Mount, and by His voluntary acceptance of rejection, scorn and cruel death? The highest moral law was said by Our Lord to impose a complete surrender of self in all its narrow sense. In this disinterestedness towards self we recognize the tremendous dynamics of Jesus' teaching. Unfortunately, our mental attitude is all too often the reverse of this idea of selflessness. In fact, the modern outlook has been described as "self first and God afterward--if I have time."

Everywhere one sees this tendency to pursue material personal possessions, even at the cost of honesty and certain Christian ideals. And again, the present dividedness of the Christian faith into many, many sects is regarded as another of its weaknesses.

In 1951 President Truman told a large audience of churchmen that he had been unable to get agreement among religious groups on a common statement of faith to meet the Communist threat. "I have asked them", President Truman told the Washington Pilgrimage of American Churchmen, "to join in one common act which will affirm those religious and moral principles on which all agree. I am sorry to say", the President went on, "that it has not yet been possible to bring the religious faiths together for this purpose of bearing witness that God is the Way of Truth and Peace. Even the Christian churches have not yet found themselves able to say with one voice that Christ is their Master and Redeemer and the source of their strength against the hosts of irreligion and the danger of world catastrophe."

It is charged, too, that orthodox Christianity offers no logical answer to the problems of justice in human experience from birth to death, and more especially in the inequalities of health, environment and opportunity characteristic of the conditions in which babies are born. The English poet, Dryden, posed the general question in his words: "Virtue in distress and vice in triumph make atheists of mankind."

In these matters, unfortunately, it would seem that Christian theology remains silent, static. To such questions of justice for man from birth to death even mid indescribable and apparently undeserved suffering, the Church can but reply "It is the will of God". That surely would make it appear

that our God is a monster of wickedness and cruelty.

If all this is true, are we not in a somewhat perilous state? I fear we are. And it is just because of this that modern Christianity itself is said to be in some need of revivification. I wonder if that is really true.

Perhaps a deepening of the interior spiritual life of us all is what is needed, the gaining of some direct knowledge of Christ, our Master, and of the Lord God Himself. Here is an interesting story which reveals the difference between purely formal Christianity and vital Christianity.

It appears that a group of students in a theological college asked a very learned professor to read The Shepherd's Psalm. He read it exceedingly well but no one was really moved by it. Then someone asked a retired minister to read the same Psalm. His sweet face shone with an inner light as he said the very same words with great reverence. When he had finished, there was not a dry eye in the room. Afterwards, when a student questioned the professor about the difference, the professor was quite honest and humble in his reply. "Well", he said to the young man, "I have studied the Bible and I know all about the Shepherd, but, you see, our friend knows the Shepherd."

There, surely, is the secret of the truly religious life. How is this interior illumination to be obtained? How may we come to know the Shepherd? By the regular practice of meditation, or scientific prayer, Theosophy answers. And this is defined by Alexis Carrell in these very splendid words with which I will close:

A serene contemplation of the immanent and transcendent principles of all things.

An uplifting of the soul to God.

An act of love and adoration towards Him from Whom comes the wonder which is life.

The effort of man to communicate with an invisible Being. A mystic state in which the consciousness is absorbed in God.

Yes, surely, the responsibility is not with our Church or its magnificent ministers, but with ourselves.

## HUMAN HAPPINESS

What is the secret of human health and happiness? Theosophy answers that basically it is twofold: knowledge concerning the nature and destiny of man, and learning to live according to the law of cause and effect. Let us examine these propositions. What is the meaning of man's existence? Amid the apparent chaos of the events of this Twentieth Century, is human existence planned and ordered? Is there justice for us all or are we at the mercy of pure chance? These are very important questions.

Theosophy answers quite definitely that life has a sublime purpose and that justice rules our lives. Theosophy teaches that the purpose of human existence is the attainment of the stature of the perfected man, and that everything that happens to us is helping towards that great attainment. St. Paul, you may remember, described this destiny of man in the following words: "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." A great destiny indeed, but how is it achieved?

Theosophy answers: by means of successive lives on earth, by the process of reincarnation, or rebirth. Theosophy teaches that we have all lived many times before. And that after we have lived a sufficient number of earthly lives man eventually comes, as St. Paul put it, "Unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

Theosophy adds to this teaching--the attainment of perfection by successive lives on earth--that the strictest justice is ensured to every human being by the operation of the law of cause and effect, action and reaction, or sowing and reaping. St. Paul also described this law in his words: "God is not mocked; whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap". This does not always seem to be so, for reactions do not necessarily occur in the same life in which the actions are performed. Effects do not always follow in the same life in which the causes are generated. They may appear later on, even in another incarnation.

But whenever the reactions or the effects are experienced, they are always strictly just. As our Lord also said: "Verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or

one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." He also went on to speak of the exactitude of the law, you may remember, saying, "Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again." "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them; for this is the Law and the Prophets."

Theosophy, however, makes a very important further statement: that we can pass from the grip of the law of cause and effect by learning to work with it. And this is part of the secret of happiness, as I said at the beginning. There is a process of spiritual alchemy by which adversity, resulting from actions motived by selfishness and cruelty can be diminished, or even dispersed, by the deliberate exertion of opposite energies and by the enactment of deeds motived by love. Love is the true philosopher's stone, and service is the alchemical process by which the baser human qualities and the pains of adversity may be transmuted into the fine gold of spiritual power. If you know this and if you learn to live according to this law you have found the secret of happiness.

A magnificent example of selfless service, born of love for fellow men, was given by four Chaplains on board a U. S. troopship during the second World War. Let me tell you the story, although most of you may remember it. Early one February morning in 1943, the U. S. troop transport Dorchester was wallowing thru icy seas off Greenland. Most of the 900 troops on board were asleep in their bunks. Suddenly a torpedo smashed into the Dorchester's thin flank. Frantically pounding up the ladders, the troops milled about in confusion on the unfamiliar decks.

In those dark moments of panic the coolest men aboard were four U. S. Army Chaplains--1st Lieuts. Clark V. Poling (Reformed Church in America), Alexander D. Goode (Jewish), John P. Washington (Catholic), and George L. Fox (Methodist). The four Chaplains led the men to boxes of life jackets, passing them out to the soldiers with boat-drill precision. When the boxes were empty, the four Chaplains quietly slipped off their own precious life preservers, put them on four young G.I.s and told them to jump. The Dorchester, as you may remember, went down 25 minutes later in a rumble of steam. Some

600 men were lost, but the heroic Chaplains had helped to save over 200. The last anyone saw of them, they were standing on the slanting deck, their arms linked together in prayer. There was true loving service to mankind.

Later on, President Truman went up to Philadelphia to speak of the matter at the opening of a \$3,000,000 All-Faiths Chapel dedicated to the memory of these Chaplains. The President was escorted by Dr. Daniel A. Poling, Chaplain of the Chapel and father of one of the heroic four. His voice echoing through the limestone archways, Harry Truman spoke with unconcealed emotion, saying: "Those four Chaplains obeyed the Divine Commandment that men should love one another....This is an old faith in our country. It is shared by all our churches and all our denominations....The unity of our country comes from this fact."

Now, it is by such deeds of loving, selfless service that the process of transmuting the imperfections of human nature into their opposite perfections may be deliberately applied to increase the speed of human evolution and to bring happiness and peace. The goal of perfected manhood which awaits us all in the far distant future, can in this way be attained in a relatively short space of time. This possibility of deliberately hastening one's evolution is thought by some scholars to crown the whole structure of religion. All great Teachers have drawn attention to this spiritual mode of life. They have also accepted and trained disciples to tread the way of "holiness", the strait gate and narrow way of Christianity.\*

When followed steadfastly this Path leads to the development of many wonderful supersensory powers, including the faculty known as intuition, which is a supramental power of cognition. As these and other faculties are developed, the person becomes increasingly useful to his fellowmen. And it is then, as taught in Theosophy, that a Great Teacher observes him and gradually draws near to him, eventually entering into the sacred relationship of Disciple and Teacher. And then a special mode of life has to be lived. The Sermon on the Mount, the teachings of the Lord Buddha, and the sublime philosophy of the Bhagavad Gita, or Lord's Song--these all define the mental attitude and the conduct necessary for

\* Is. XXXV:8 Matt. VII:14

the swift attainment of the goal of human life, for the discovery of the Master, for entry into discipleship with Him.

Let me close with a description of this ancient way of life as given by the Lord Buddha some two thousand five hundred years ago. He called it the Noble Eightfold Path. Here are the eight parts of it: Right Belief, Right Thought, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Means of Livelihood, Right Exertion, Right Remembrance and Right Meditation. Summed up, this means, as The Lord Buddha also said: "To cease from sin, to get virtue, to purify the heart and to serve the world."

Theosophy teaches that this Path is open today as of old and can be trodden by means of self-purification and selfless service--like that of those four great Chaplains--selfless service to the world. This is the true pathway to human health, human happiness, perfection and eternal peace. Let me repeat the words of the Lord Buddha: To cease from sin, to get virtue, to purify the heart, and to serve the world.

## THE PATHWAY TO PEACE

How may we, you and I and all our fellowmen, find serenity of heart and mind amid the strains and stresses of modern life? Theosophy answers that important question very clearly. It tells us that peace of mind can be reached by gaining a due understanding of the meaning and the purpose of human existence. What is that purpose? Why are we here? What is the meaning of our lives? Theosophy answers simply and plainly: "Evolution to perfection".

Life is not purposeless but very purposeful. It is gradually bringing us as a Race and as individual people to the stature of perfected man. The evolution of man to ever greater and greater heights is taught in Theosophy to be the purpose of his existence, "the one far-off divine event towards which the whole creation moves", as Tennyson said. The spiritual Self of man is a God in the becoming and his future splendor, wisdom and power are entirely without limit. This, then, is the theosophical solution of the problem of the ultimate destiny of man for this epoch. And once this knowledge is really absorbed and applied to life, the mind is at once sunk in peace. The heart becomes serene.

Theosophy then draws attention to a further great idea. It is that the goal of human perfection to which we are all moving has already been reached by certain advanced men and women. Such perfected Beings are known as World Saviours, Rishis (which means Sages), Mahatmas (Great Souls), Adepts and Masters of the Wisdom. These superhuman Beings are organized into a great Adept Fraternity, sometimes called the Occult Hierarchy, and sometimes the Great White Brotherhood. They are regarded as the true spiritual Teachers and Inspirers of mankind. They are the august body of "just men made perfect" (St. Paul) and the Communion of Saints.

They are no vague tenets to the well instructed student of Theosophy. For him the Communion of Saints is a living truth, and the Masters of the Wisdom are living Supermen with whom a man may enter into direct relationship and Whose life of service to the Divine Will on earth he may begin to share. Eventually, aided by these Great Ones, by a Master, man may climb to the height upon which They already stand. They are the Great Initiates of the Sanctuaries of the Greater Mystery.

ies of which we read in ancient literature, and these solutions of life's problems were discovered and given to the world by Them. Any sincere and capable servant of the human race can receive and deliver this teaching of the Great Adepts to his fellow men.

How then is this state of perfected manhood to be attained? The goal of human perfection, says Theosophy, is reached by means of successive lives in material bodies or vehicles, newly formed during the pre-natal period of each succeeding life. Here, you see, we meet the doctrine of rebirth, which needs to be studied in detail and is not my special subject in this talk. I may say here, however, that reincarnation is the one and I believe the only logical solution to the problems of life. I refer especially to the problems of time and opportunity in which to attain perfection, and more especially to the great problem of justice in human life. This last is especially important in the attaining of serenity of mind for without reincarnation and the law of cause and effect life is utterly unjust, is indeed a hopeless riddle which defies solution. With reincarnation and its twin idea of the law of cause and effect a flood of light is shed upon human life and we see it in its inception, its evolution, and its goal.

Successive lives alone make possible the attainment of perfected manhood; for, the multifarious experiences of these repeated incarnations are designed to draw out the latent powers of this evolving God which is man. Every experience, you know, has its value in terms of an increase of power, wisdom and knowledge. At the near approach to perfection, rebirth becomes no longer a necessity. All further progress can be achieved in the superphysical worlds. Thus in the New Testament we are promised: "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out."

The next theosophical thought especially concerns justice for man on earth. I've already referred to it in passing. More fully, this concept is that all human incarnations--these several lives of ours--are connected with each other by the operation of the law of cause and effect, or readjustment. All actions, feelings and thoughts produce their own natural and perfectly appropriate reactions. These actions may follow their causative actions immediately, like putting

your finger in the fire and getting burned at once. Or they may follow later in the same life or in succeeding incarnations.

This law is referred to in our Bible, in the text: "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap". The Sanskrit word, as you doubtless know, is karma, meaning action, and is used to designate the operation of this eternal, impersonal, immutable law.

The law works something like this: Actions motived by love, service and unselfishness produce a pleasure, a health, and a growing freedom of self expression which encourage the actor to repeat them. But, on the other hand, actions motived by dislike, greed, selfishness and cruelty produce a pain and an increasing limitation of self-expression, which discourage the actor from repeating them. Moreover, the intensity of the pleasure or the pain is governed by the degree in which the unselfish or selfish motives find expression in action.

So you see that suffering is not a retribution imposed by Deity, or punishment, nor accidental adversity. All pain is self-inflicted and educative in the extreme. This is the solution of the problem of justice for man, especially in regard to suffering and disease.

Now I want to put another idea before you concerning this law of cause and effect. The principle of the modification of karma, of the law of cause and effect, must always be remembered. You see, before effects have had time to be received, intervening actions can so modify the original ones as to change the result altogether. And so, whatever one's actions may have been in the past, their reactions are not to be regarded as an irretrievable fate or as a dead weight from which there is no relief. By subsequent actions, man can modify the operation of the law of cause and effect upon himself.

So you see, neither individuals nor nations need ever be paralyzed by their past actions and their results. Everything is not irretrievably fated, however good or bad the past. Man can master circumstances and make of each experience an opportunity for a fresh beginning, however heavily the past may weigh upon him. Isn't that a splendid idea? Doesn't

that already bring a certain peace to heart and mind?

This is a very important idea--that we can pass from the grip of the law by learning to work with it. To savages and criminals civil law is an enemy, but to civilized men it is a form of protection. The same applies to the universal law of cause and effect. To selfish, lawless and cruel people it brings retribution, nemesis; but to others, the causative law for those who live by love, helpfulness and service, brings them health, happiness and freedom.

The Spiritual Self, the reincarnating individuality, is continually aware of the operation of this educative law and so acquires knowledge, wisdom, power and character-development as a result. The law moves to righteousness. And this is very important. Because the knowledge acquired from life's experiences--the knowledge and capacity wrested from life--constitute man's true and eternal riches. These are the "treasures in heaven which neither moth nor rust doth corrupt and where thieves do not break through nor steal". Ruskin pointed this out, saying: "There is no wealth but life, including all its powers of love, of joy, of admiration."

The action of this law of readjustment constitutes the only external control or judgment to which man is ever subjected. Man makes his own destiny by his own actions, and within this law he is absolutely and unconditionally free. Man is subject to no external, spiritual authority or power whatever. We need not fear anything save the weaknesses of our own character and the transgressions to which they lead.

Such is a sublime philosophy of life. Absorb it, my friends, and you will find that it really will bring to you peace of heart and of mind. It will enable you to meet the adversities, the stresses and the strains of life with equanimity and with poise. For you can know the whole meaning of man's existence. You know that he is a divine being, a God in the becoming, on an evolutionary journey which will bring him "to the stature of the perfect man".

## ANGELS AND ARCHANGELS

All World Faiths teach that God is served by hosts of Angelic Ministers, Beings normally invisible but potentially very helpful to man. Does Theosophy support this teaching? Yes, definitely it does. Theosophy tells of the existence of great Orders of Intelligences, quite distinct from man.

I am well aware that the idea of normally invisible Intelligences may not be very acceptable to many of us in this modern and very practical age. We are accustomed, aren't we, to the demonstration, the proof, and the practical application to human welfare, of all knowledge and all human discoveries. And so ideas concerning angels are, in consequence, inclined to be thought of as somewhat fanciful and, at best, as rather unprofitable, of little practical value to the busy man and woman of the world. I recognize this; but, if I may, I would advise against too sudden and too decisive a dismissal of the concept of the existence of such invisible Beings.

Science itself assures us that behind our visible universe, as the very source of its existence, there is invisible electrical energy, positive, negative, and neutral in polarity and normally unseen. Furthermore, parapsychology now is also proclaiming, after years of severe tests, the existence in man of supersensory powers of seeing and knowing, and it calls them "Extra-Sensory Perception", or as you doubtless know, ESP for short.

It is not, therefore, a very great step forward to admit the existence both of intelligent Beings working as engineers amidst the great powerhouse of Nature, and of the faculty of trained seership, trained ESP, which could enable its possessors to discern such Beings and to explore the normally invisible universe. Furthermore, the weight of evidence for the existence of both angels and human psychic faculties is overwhelming for those who impartially and with an open mind will study these two subjects. Let us look at them together.

Throughout all time of which records exist, men have borne testimony to their perception of forces, phenomena and beings not normally visible. Despite wide separation both in time and in space all over the globe there is a remarkable

resemblance between the myths, the legends, the descriptive folklore and scriptural accounts belonging to the various peoples of the Earth. This universality, similarity and persistence of belief in the Kingdom of the Angels is, in itself, strong evidence for the existence of at least a kernel of reality within that belief. It indicates a basis of fact upon which belief in the angelic hosts is founded.

Added to this general wide-spread belief is the testimony of those who have made both a science and an art of the process of self-illumination, which, as you doubtless know, is called in the East Yoga. The followers of this, the oldest and greatest of the sciences, the science of the Soul of Nature and of man, aver that the extension of visual and hearing power and mastery of the forces of man's own nature and of Nature herself can definitely and deliberately and consciously be achieved. Anyone, the great seers tell us, who will fulfil the necessary conditions, who will obey laws as certain in their operation as those to which the chemist subscribes in his laboratory, can pierce the veil of matter which normally hides from view the eternal, spiritual realities, the inner worlds and their inhabitants such as the angelic hosts.

Before I present some of the findings of such trained seers concerning the invisible aspects of Nature, let us first note what science has to say upon the subject of the existence of an Intelligent Power as the driving and directing force behind all Nature. Science nowadays says a very great deal on this subject. Listen, for instance, to Sir James Jeans, the great British astronomer. In his book, The Mysterious Universe, he writes: "We discover that the universe shows evidence of a designing or controlling power that has something in common with our own individual minds... The universe can be best pictured...as consisting of pure thought, a thought of what, for want of a wider word, we must describe as a mathematical thinker."

Einstein has stated: "I believe in God--who reveals Himself in the orderly harmony of the universe. I believe that Intelligence is manifested throughout all Nature. The basis of scientific work is the conviction that the world is an ordered and comprehensible entity and not a thing of Chance." A great Harvard geologist has also said: "The nearest approach we have thus far made to the Ultimate, in our analy-

sis of Matter and of Energy, indicates that the Universal Reality is mind." If the concept--the theosophical concept--be added of individual Intelligences, Archangelic and Angelic embodiments of the "pure thought" of the universe, then this might well have been written by an exponent of Theosophy.

For Theosophy, in its turn, remember, is founded upon scientific exploration and upon investigation by means of trained ESP, supersensory powers, and it has much to tell of both the invisible worlds and the invisible beings who are their denizens. Let me briefly put before you some theosophical teachings concerning the Angelic Hosts. Would it be too much to suggest to you that you listen to what I am now going to say as you would to the words of an explorer who is describing the results of his experiences, researches, and explorations in some new and strange land?

Eastern people, as well as numerous members of the Celtic and other naturally psychic races, are familiar with the idea of the existence of the Archangels, the angels, and even their younger brethren as they are called, the nature spirits, fairies and the like. In the East, these beings have a Sanskrit name which is devas, meaning "shining ones" and referring to their self-luminous appearance. And the devas, or angelic hosts, are regarded as everywhere present as the superphysical agents of the Deity, of the one Creative Will, serving also as directors of all natural forces, laws and processes everywhere throughout the whole of creation.

Furthermore, it is taught that certain of these Angelic Beings are associated more closely with man than with the forces of Nature, and these are the ones more generally referred to by us as the angels. Are they then higher in evolution than we are?

There are said to be three main stages of angelic development, each having its own name. First, it is taught, there are the little nature spirits. Please don't dismiss the idea. It is not altogether fanciful as I have tried to point out. And there is a real basis of fact for belief in such little beings as the gnomes, the fairies, the sylphs and the like. They are about at the level of intelligence of animals and birds and they are actuated by group consciousness, shared with others of the same tribe.

And then, more developed than they, are the angels or the devas who have already evolved out of group consciousness into separate individuality, as man has done. And third, there are the Archangels, who have transcended the limitations of individuality and have entered into universal or cosmic consciousness.

Now, these Beings can be very helpful to man. They can serve as guardians. They can help in healing the sick. And if you care to read our theosophical books on the subject, you could gain a great deal of information about these Beings and the way they can be serviceable to man.

## THE CHRIST LIFE

In this broadcast I am going to present a point of view concerning the Scriptures which, though extremely old, may seem quite revolutionary to many orthodox Christians. This is that the Four Gospels do not merely record the history of external events in time. The inspired authors of the Gospels also reveal eternal truths, and describe spiritual attainments, experiences and powers--sensory and supersensory--of every human being.

Thus the Gospel narrative is, in general, of threefold significance. It is the story of the life of Jesus, the Christ. But it is also, as St. John informs us in his first five verses, the story of the universe from its beginning, or "Nativity" on to its end or "Ascension". In addition to this the Christ life is told as a universal human life. It is your life and my life, especially after we are spiritually awakened, or as it is said "reborn" and our supersensory powers begin to be developed.

The Gospel tells of the formation--or "birth"--and the evolution both of the whole Universe to perfection, and of the Soul of individual man to Christhood. Especially does the deathless story reveal the final stages of the Way of Holiness, treading which every man ascends through sainthood to the development of great mental and spiritual powers, culminating in the stature of perfected manhood, or Adeptship.

Before I proceed to explain this point of view, I wish to make it clear that I have no desire whatever to weaken the faith of anyone who believes in the literal reading of our Scriptures. Neither do I want to complicate an essentially simple story. I wish only to offer, quite undogmatically, some possible interpretations from these three points of view of the life of Jesus, the Christ. Let us look at the immortal story, and more especially from that third point of view descriptive of the development of the soul of man.

There are three main types of men and women introduced into the Gospel stories. First the unheeding, work-a-day people of the world, unawake to idealism and uninterested in the possible existence of the superphysical worlds and the Way of Holiness. This was the contemporary population of Palestine amid which the Lord Christ moved. Second, however,

there were these people who were awakening to spiritual realities and beginning to hear the call of the Divine Voice within them.

The rich young ruler who approached the Master in search of eternal life is an example of those who are spiritually awakening, but are not yet quite ready to meet all the conditions necessary for the life of discipleship. You will remember perhaps how, in answer to his first question as to how he could attain to eternal life, he was told by Our Lord to keep the Commandments. He said that he had done this from his youth up. And then came the acid test. Our Lord said to him: "Sell that thou hast, and give to the poor and thou shalt have treasure in heaven, and come and follow me." Then there is given what surely is one of the most poignant sentences in the whole Bible. "He went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions."<sup>\*</sup>

We need not regard this decision as final, however. Perhaps later in life the rich young ruler may have found himself ready to forsake the world, or rather, the attitude of mind which has a purely worldly motive and setting, to follow the great spiritual ideal of service and selflessness. Reincarnationists probably would tell us that, even if not in that same incarnation, the opportunity for discipleship would again present itself and, in due course, be accepted.

The third type of men and women introduced into the Gospel narrative are those who were quite ready wholly to dedicate themselves to spiritual ideals. And the Gospel has a special message for these. For these were the awakened ones who had answered the inner call to the Higher Life and who were determined, even amid worldly duties, to "enter in at the strait gate" and follow the narrow way of which Our Lord spoke. The "Way of Holiness" Isaiah had called it. These people became disciples and other immediate followers of Our Lord, and it is they who afterwards transmitted so much of His message to the world.

These three types--the spiritually asleep, those who are awakening, and those who are fully awake--all exist today. You and I belong to one or other of the three types. For all of these people, whatever their outlook on life, the

\* Matt. XIX.16-20

Christ life is a perfect pattern. It is a perfect example, especially for those spiritually awakening, the seeking and the aspiring ones among men and women, of whom there are so many today, I especially believe. For all of these the Christ life provides more perfect guidance.

For those today who thus accept and really try to live Our Lord's teachings, then, a very wonderful thing occurs, a kind of miracle. As so many have found, a mystery is enacted within and around them. Those who are thus awakened experience within themselves and enact in their own lives the major incidents in the life of Our Lord and His disciples. The particular interpretation of that life which I am now going to offer you applies to these inner experiences, which I believe are far more common than is generally realised. Let me explain.

The five major recorded stages in the life of Our Lord are passed through by those who are spiritually awakening. The Nativity, the Baptism, the Transfiguration, the Crucifixion and the Ascension of Our Lord are recorded in the gospels in such a way that they portray, by allegory and symbol, the experiences of every human being who at any time finds the Master's feet. They are trained by Him. Their supersensory powers are awakened. And then, in due course, they are presented for a wonderful experience, a ceremony for what is called spiritual Initiation, spiritual dedication to the swift ascent of the evolutionary Mount, to the attainment in a relatively short space of time of the stature of a perfect man.

I am well aware that this view of the Gospel narrative as a description of events occurring within the Soul of spiritually awakened man may sound strange to some of you who are listening and may be hearing it for the first time. Please do not hastily discard it. Let us just glance at the first phase of the life of Our Lord, the Nativity.

The first references to the historical birth of the Christ Child occur in the Old Testament and they refer to the coming of the Messiah. They are followed by the mission of John the Baptist, whose call to the people of his time represents the voice of the Higher Self of individual man, a voice which, if heeded, eventually becomes the impelling summons of a fully awakened conscience. As a result the daily

life is purified of selfishness, cleansed of sensuality and of self-indulgence. Possessiveness begins to be outgrown. Service on behalf of others assumes an ever increasing place in the life of the aspirant. Eventually the Inner Self rules the outer man, and a spiritual mode of life, a veritable rebirth, an inner Nativity, occurs, even amidst worldly duties.

After a kind of interior Annunciation, which is the call from the Highest Self, the "Dweller in the Innermost", then power descends, a kind of creative power within the spiritual soul. This produces profound psychological and spiritual developments. A real spiritual birth from within the soul occurs. New faculties are awakened and a Christ-like attitude towards life is quite naturally adopted. A deepening sense of unity with God and with all beings develops, and this leads to a life of self-surrender and sacrificial love. Thereafter this new-found realisation dominates the thoughts and motives, the words and the deeds of the outer man and his life. These become completely reformed, reorganised. Mystically he is said to be reborn, or as Our Lord said, "born again".\*

St. Paul also said to his disciples: "I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you." This is a very real possibility, a kind of interior transformation of the soul of man into a Christlike nature. Beauty and love can occur within the individual who will dedicate himself to the service of God and his fellowmen. A certain amount of surrender of worldly pleasures and activities may be necessary perhaps, but they are in reality outgrown. This is symbolized by the birth of Our Lord in poverty, in the mere stable of an inn, among the animals. The inn itself was full. It represents the worldly life. But the stable of the inn represents the whole of Initiation, the cave of the heart wherein the mystical new birth occurs.

\* John 111.3.

## MAN'S ULTIMATE GOAL

Was discipleship of a great teacher attained only by the twelve Apostles or is it still possible to find one's Spiritual Teacher and be trained by Him? Theosophy answers the second of those two questions in the affirmative. Yes, great Adept Masters do exist, and discipleship under one of Them is a possibility for modern man.

How could discipleship be reached? First by discovery of certain knowledge about man and secondly by its application to the living of human life. What is this necessary knowledge? Well, it consists partly of answers to certain questions such as the purpose of human existence, why we are here, whence we have come, whither we are going and how we will get there. The literature of very ancient peoples, which has been preserved, indicates that these great questions have absorbed the attention of the human mind from the remotest ages. All of them are fully and satisfactorily answered by theosophy. Let me, then, briefly put this knowledge before you.

What is Man? Man is defined theosophically as that being in whom highest Spirit and lowest matter are united by intellect. Highest Spirit, of course, means the innermost self, the Divine spark in man. And lowest matter refers to his physical body and nature, while the uniting principle of intellect refers to his mind and mental powers. The essential unit of human existence, the Innermost human Spirit, becomes manifest first as an inner immortal self, or human spiritual soul, and second, during successive lives on earth, as an outer mortal personality in bodily form. And this is the man down here in the physical world.

What is the purpose of this dual manifestation of the inner self and the mortal man? Theosophy answers in a word,--"evolution". The Inner Self of man gains experience, knowledge and evolutionary progress through the activities and the reaction to life of the outer man. By that means, and partly by an interior unfoldment, the Innermost Self--the God in man--perpetually unfolds and develops its germinal powers. This process is indeed perpetual, uninterrupted, the Inner Self being immune from death.

The outer, physical form of man is, on the other hand, only

a temporary creation. It is born and develops to full bodily maturity, after which it begins to decline and eventually dies, disintegrates, to reappear no more. But the faculties and capacities developed by this outer self are permanently preserved in the Spiritual Soul, there being but one consciousness and one life in both the outer and the inner man.

Thus we learn from Theosophy that the immediate objective of human existence is the development of faculty. I believe that to be the whole purpose of the evolutionary process--the development of more and more faculty to the highest degree. The long-term objective is all-round genius, the development to the highest possible degree of all the powers of the inner spiritual self. And when this is achieved, then man reaches what is called Adeptship. And this is the goal of human existence.

How is this goal reached? How is Salvation attained? Theosophy answers: by two means--interior unfoldment and external experience. Interior unfoldment is continuous; physical experience is intermittent. Therefore, repeated physical births are necessary. Reincarnation provides the time, the opportunity and the external experience which contribute to the continuous spiritual unfoldment.

The next and very important step in thought is this: the cosmic law by which dynamic equilibrium is perpetually preserved operates upon man as a harmonising, compensatory agency. He experiences it as cause and effect. Every thought, feeling, word and deed produces its own exactly appropriate reaction, thereby ensuring absolute justice to every human being. Merciful, kindly and controlled actions and the right use of the physical body conduce to health and happiness, while their opposites inevitably bring sorrow and pain. All human experiences, all conditions, successes and failures are decided by the preceding actions of those who pass through them. This law of compensation, knowledge of which is so important, is impersonal in its action, inevitable, unchanging, and it is wholly to be trusted. You can build upon it and it will never fail you. The places and conditions in which individuals and races are born, for example, as well as those later entered, are exactly the "right" places and the right conditions for those times and people. Only in them can justice be done and the experience required for

the attainment of Adeptship be obtained.

Now the next important step in thought. Theosophy carries this great story of man still further, saying that some men and some women have already attained to the stature of the perfected man and that certain of these Adepts remain physically upon our Earth as Members of a highly organised Fraternity of Superhuman Beings. They are Agents of the purposes and laws of life--Great Servers of God and Directors of planetary evolution.

Is it then really possible to discover these Great Beings and become Their disciple? Yes. For in Their compassion for humanity some of these Great Sages accept individual men and women for training in the mode of life and thought which increases the rate of evolutionary progress. And this is called the Path of Swift Unfoldment or, in Christianity, the Straight and Narrow Way. These Adepts, Perfected Ones, Who teach and train pupils, are known as Masters of the Wisdom. And indeed They can be successfully approached by those who fulfil the necessary conditions and apply for admission to Their Presence in the appointed way. These conditions and the method of application are fully described in theosophical literature.

The would-be disciple must, however, change himself or herself from a self-indulgent, selfish individual into a self-disciplined and selfless servant of humanity. When he does that and acquires the necessary knowledge which I have been putting before you--then, there exist in him the conditions for discipleship. Then, his Master will sooner or later appear to him.

Is it possible to prove or test such a statement of theosophy? Yes, it is, but one has to apply the final test of truth, which is two-fold. It consists of direct superphysical observation by means of supersensory powers on the one hand, and the experimental application of the ideas to physical life on the other. Just as the student of geography first takes information from teachers, books, maps and photographs, both still and moving, but must visit the place studied for full knowledge, so also the student of Theosophy, after contacting, comprehending and applying its teachings to life, must add direct perception and experience of teachings in order to become a knower, and then, a disciple of a Great

Master.

So, you see, the student of Theosophy passes through three successive stages: first, discovery, then examination, test by reason, application to life, and finally--guided by a Master--investigation by direct observation, using the inner, psychic, highly developed powers--extra sensory perception indeed.

Thus, you see, theosophy teaches that a man can either delay or hasten the process of his development, both of his sensory powers and his supersensory powers. He also can hasten his progress of attainment of perfection. And it is in this last that the help of a Master is so important. He, Himself, has completed the long evolutionary road and He is, therefore, well qualified to take a human being, guide him, guard and train him as a disciple and lead him up to those great heights upon which He, Himself, now stands. This is an actual possibility.

If we can resist the pull of the past and the call of the world and old habits and indulgences, then we can grow in wisdom, in determination and understanding. A soul can be alight, a heart aflame, and we can become guiding stars of our fellowmen, as our Master becomes the Guiding Star for us. Indeed, this is a practical possibility for any selfless and determined human being. For an old theosophical adage says: When the pupil is ready, the Master appears.

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